

The Arts Services Initiative



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For anyone who might not be familiar with Arts Services Initiative of Western New York, there's a lot of catching up to do. To start, the initiative was forged in 2011 in order to fill the need for a non-profit organization that could be instrumental in a range of services for artists and art organizations. After the Buffalo Arts Council fizzled out, and a host of other groups and organizations formed to help take over the reigns, it was determined that no *one* existing organization would be able to come forward and take the lead. That meant that a new service and planning organization needed to be formed, and it was deemed that Fund for the Arts commission a consultant to meet with the culturals to see what it was that they felt was needed. From there it was determined that Western New York was lacking a comprehensive organization that could administer funding, help convey the importance of the arts to the region, and be aggressive in gaining support for the local arts. Thus was born The Arts Services Initiative (ASI) - and a search for an Executive Director was underway.

It was ultimately decided that Tod A. Kniazuk would head up the organization. Tod was coming off the heels of running Music is Art as Executive Director, which put him in an

opportune light to head up the new initiative. It didn't take long for ASI to hit the ground running. The organization has been instrumental in a number of initiatives that includes helping to identify and administer grant funding for the arts community - grants that otherwise would have passed this region by. One positively brilliant initiative was to work with the Amherst Chamber of Commerce to introduce health care plans for artists ([see here](#)). And soon a massive undertaking will see ASI embarking upon a project that will map GPS locations in order to pinpoint exactly where cultural-related spending is taking place, both direct and non-direct. By showing the importance of cultural spending, it is the hope that ASI can demonstrate the strength of the local art community, both big and small (in order to apply for additional funding for the arts).

In a short period of time, we have seen a surprising series of art-forward initiatives by ASI, which is remarkable considering that it was just a short while ago when this city was still reeling from the mishaps of the Buffalo Arts Council. For the first time, we are seeing an organization that is interested in promoting collaboration, including working with other cultural organizations such as Theater Alliance of Buffalo and Give for Greatness. At the same time, ASI is helping the individual artists to fulfill their own destinies. The group is here to help Buffalo artists continue to paint a picture of this city as an arts destination... while helping to unlock the potential that we all know is right in front of our noses.

If you would like learn more about ASI, please contact:

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